

[1941] Edmonton

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# ALBERTA FARMERS' UNION

# Action Program

1. Parity Prices
2. Adequate Markets
3. Income Tax Revision
4. Freight Rate Revision
5. Education, Health,  
Recreation

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## **FOREWORD TO FARMERS' PLATFORM**

Political groups of every belief have always been ready to acknowledge that the farmer is the backbone of the nation—**AT ELECTION TIME.**

However, such acknowledgment has not been followed by the necessary legislation to ensure that the economic position of agriculture shall be established on a paying basis.

All political candidates who claim that they wish to legislate for the welfare of the majority of the Canadian people should be willing to endorse this Farmers' Platform and sign the pledge on the last page of this booklet.

(We request our members to present this pledge to all political candidates holding meetings at your points and refusal to sign will incur the non-support of Union members.)

## **ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE**

### **PARITY PRICES**

This implies that the Agricultural population shall receive its rightful share of the National income.

A right relationship of prices must prevail at all times so that the prices received by Agriculture shall enable farmers to buy an equivalent service rendered by any other occupational group as a result of a similar amount of expended effort.

This would necessitate the setting up of a Board which would adjust prices periodically so that an approximate Parity would be always maintained.

## **IMMEDIATE ACTION PROGRAM**

### **or Steps Toward Our**

### **Ultimate Objective**

1. Security of Tenure
2. Equitable Debt Adjustment

Already looming before us are the problems which will have to be faced in regard to post-war reconstruction. None of these problems can be solved unless the problems of agriculture are dealt with properly.

The entire national economy rests on the foundation of its basic industry—agriculture. Unless that foundation is sound and stable, unless agriculture is prosperous, the national economy cannot be sound, stable and prosperous.

The major reforms necessary for the reconstruction of agriculture are definite and clear-cut. They are, in the order listed:

- (a) Security of Land Tenure and Right of Possession.
- (b) An equitable adjustment and settlement of debts.
- (c) Adequate market facilities.
- (d) Proper credit facilities at low rates of interest.

The basis of these is the first—namely—*Security of Land Tenure and Right of Possession*. Without security on his land the farmer is without security at all. He is little better than a serf who can be ordered off his farm.

## FACING THE PROBLEM

It is abundantly clear that if the farmer does not help himself nobody is going to help him. Should the present situation be permitted to drift, we shall emerge from the war with the money-lending corporations in control of Canadian Agriculture and the farmers reduced to a condition of

abject serfdom, worse than anything they have experienced in the past.

If farmers are prepared to submit to this—if they are willing to allow democracy at home to be sabotaged, while our men are fighting for it overseas so that a few money manipulating concerns may feast and fatten at their expense and become the over-lords of Canadian Agriculture—if they lack the backbone to take common action to assert their constitutional rights as citizens—nothing can be done to avert the disaster which threatens agriculture.

The alternative is to take definite and effective action *now*—action which will carry us to our goal step by step. And the first and basic objective to be attained is Security of Tenure and Right of Possession.

Let us face the facts realistically. It is useless to look for protection from Provincial Debt Legislation. We have evidence that the law has been framed to make this impossible. It is useless to look for action from Ottawa. We have evidence that the control of the money interests in that quarter will always over-ride the farmers' interests. Moreover, debt legislation is no solution for our problem. It is a palliative. It merely pushes the problem into the future. It does not provide a solid foundation on which to build. The remedy lies in one or both of Political or Direct Action.

## **MONETARY REFORM POLICY**

### **RENEWAL OF BANK CHARTERS**

1. That Bank Charters be renewed for a period of one year only, and thereafter be granted on a year-to-year basis until the monetary requirements in connection with post-war reconstruction have been definitely decided to the satisfaction of the people.
2. That the Bank of Canada Act be amended to permit our National Bank to provide the nation with ordinary banking services, and branches of the Bank of Canada be established at key points throughout the Dominion, to operate in competition with the chartered banks, for the purpose of exercising effective control over the policy and conduct of those private corporations in the interests of the people.
3. In order to get and maintain Parity Prices for Farm Products the people of the country must have absolute control of the policy of finance through their Parliamentary representatives, and that the Alberta Farmers' Union regard this issue of such importance that it shall advocate that branches of the Bank of Canada be set up all over Canada in order to provide competitive service to the existing branches of the Chartered Banks for short term commercial credits, and to reduce

charges for all services connected with the use of financial credit to the cost of the service.

4. That the Bank of Canada use its financing facilities so as to pay the Canadian farmer Parity Prices for his products irrespective of what they sell for abroad, and that these Exports be exchanged for Imports by an import and export board and the Imports be priced in accordance with a Canadian price standard.

## **EDUCATION POLICY**

Educational facilities should be fully financed by Provincial and Dominion Governments without debt or interest.

Children should be considered as the greatest assets which any Nation has and no effort should be spared to afford every opportunity for the greatest development to every individual.

## **HEALTH POLICY**

We are in favor of forwarding such policies as will enable everybody to receive such health services as medical science and invention have made possible.

All health and medical services shall be brought under the direct supervision of Parliament, regulated by qualified Boards.

## **RECREATION POLICY**

Encourage a recreational program among the people engaged in the occupation of farming so as to bear a relative comparison with that enjoyed by the people in the cities.

## **FREIGHT RATES**

1. Equitable adjustment of freight rates.
2. A per ton, per mile, rate on the same classification across Canada.

## **INCOME TAX**

No Income Taxes to be levied on any income which is not sufficient to provide the recipient with a standard of living in decency and comfort.

Any income used to make payments on any debt, either Principal or Interest, incurred or imposed, previous to December, 1940, shall be exempt from Income Tax Regulations.

## **DIRECT ACTION**

Obtain support of political candidate in favor of Union taking Direct Action in the event that such a course is found necessary.

1. It is legal.
2. It is a principle well established by Trades Union organizations in order to establish their

claims to a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work".

3. It is the final constitutional action of any body of organized people who are denied their economic rights.

## **POLITICAL ACTION**

### **ALBERTA FARMERS' UNION ATTITUDE RE POLITICAL PARTY CANDIDATES**

It is a fundamental democratic right that, as the sovereign authority, the people should dictate policy and the responsible Government should carry it out.

The farmers of Canada have been ignored consistently in their demands for fair prices with disastrous results to the National economy.

Past experience has shown that only by united action on the part of all farmers through their accredited organizations will it be possible to bring the necessary pressure on Parliament to obtain fair parity prices for agriculture.

Obtain from leaders and candidates of all parties a written statement as to whether, if elected to office, their parties will immediately enact the foregoing legislation, making it clear that refusal of any party candidate or leader to give such an undertaking will involve all members of the Union casting their votes against that party in the next Federal or Provincial election.

# **PLEDGE**

I,.....

as candidate for.....party  
in the Provincial Constituency of—  
.....

in the Federal Riding of.....  
will press at the first and every session for the  
enactment of these measures to the full extent  
of my ability, regardless of party affiliation, until  
such action is secured.

SIGNED.....

PARTY.....

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